



## African Americans from A to Z



### *A Celebration of Black History Month*



## A is for Maya Angelou



One of the most important sources of Angelou's fame in the early 1990s was President Bill Clinton's invitation to write and read the first inaugural poem in decades. Americans all across the country watched the six-foot-tall, elegantly-dressed woman as she read her poem for the new president on January 20, 1993. "On the Pulse of Morning," which begins "A Rock, A River, A Tree," calls for peace, racial and religious harmony, and social justice for people of different origins, incomes, genders, and sexual orientations. It recalls the civil rights movement, and Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I have a dream" speech as it urges America to "Give birth again/To the Dream" of equality.

## B is for Charles Bolden



Astronaut

Born: Columbia, SC

US Naval Academy

Univ. of Southern Cal

"I walked into NASA control and there were no black controllers. There are now. I guess I bit my lip at the time, but I learned it was not NASA's fault. Blacks just didn't apply, so when I talk to young people, I tell them to get with it."

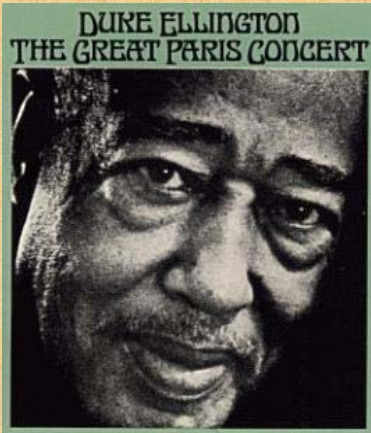
## C is for George Washington Carver



The development of peanuts and sweet potatoes from commercial crops to leading crops in the South during Carver's career was attributed to his demonstration of their possibilities. In a laboratory at Tuskegee, equipped largely with improvised equipment garnered from trash piles, he began about 1915 to develop special exhibits of peanut products that eventually included some 325 items, ranging from beverages, mixed pickles, and meal to wood fillers, ink, and synthetic rubber.



## D is for Duke Ellington



Duke Ellington is generally considered to be the most important and prolific composer in jazz history. Although most of his works were recorded by his orchestra, their exact number is unknown. Estimates suggest some two thousand compositions, including hundreds of instrumental pieces, popular songs, large-scale suites, several musical comedies, various film scores, and an unfinished opera, "Boola."

## E is for Julius Erving



Professional basketball player, Virginia Squires (ABA), 1971-73; New York Nets (ABA), 1973-76; Philadelphia 76ers (NBA), 1976-87. Executive vice-president, Orlando Magic, 1997-.

In 1993 he was elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame, and in 1994, as part of its 40th anniversary, Sports Illustrated named him to a list of its 40 most important athletes. In 1996, as the NBA celebrated its 50th anniversary, Erving was an easy choice for one of the top 50 players in the history of the league.

## F is for Aretha Franklin



Franklin's first album for Atlantic, **I Never Loved a Man (the Way I Love You)**, was released in 1967, and several hit-filled LPs followed. During this crucial period she enjoyed a succession of smash singles that included the rollicking "Baby I Love You," the pounding groove "Chain of Fools," the supercharged "Think," (which she wrote), the tender "(You Make Me Feel Like a) Natural Woman," and a blistering take on Otis Redding's "Respect." The latter two would become Franklin's signature songs.

## G is for Nikki Giovanni



One of the best-known African American poets to reach prominence during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Nikki Giovanni has continued to create poems that encompass a life fully experienced. Her unique and insightful verses testify to her own evolving awareness and experiences as a woman of color: from child to young woman, from naive college freshman to seasoned civil rights activist, and from daughter to mother.



## H is for Charlayne Hunter-Gault



**Charlayne Hunter-Gault** Charlayne Hunter-Gault, a native of Due West, South Carolina is an outstanding journalist. She has published articles in The New York Times Magazine, Saturday Review, The New York Time Book Review and Essence, in addition to The New York Times and The New Yorker. She has never looked upon being African-American and female as handicaps and has used them to her advantage. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia which she and Hamilton Holmes desegregated in 1961.

## I is for Allen Iverson



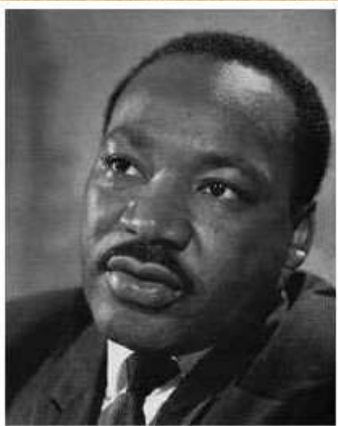
On June 26, 1996 Iverson was the first player selected in the NBA draft by the Philadelphia 76ers. He signed a \$9.4 million contract and set his sights on becoming the best player in the NBA. If he was not the best on the court in his first season, Iverson quickly established himself as one of the most exciting players in the league. His crossover dribble proved to be so explosive that the NBA issued a memo to referees across the league addressing one individual player's single move. Iverson had to change his crossover dribble slightly to avoid traveling but that did not diminish his achievements. He led his team and all NBA rookies in points (23.5), assists (7.5), steals (2.07), and in minutes played (40.1) per game.

## J is for James Earl Jones



Some people know him as one of the nation's finest stage actors, an artist who tackles the works of such playwrights as William Shakespeare and Eugene O'Neill. Others know his sonorous bass voice as the most menacing aspect of the evil Darth Vader in the blockbuster film *Star Wars*. Still others recognize him as a television star who brings depths of humanity to clichéd character parts. James Earl Jones fits all these descriptions, and more: for more than 30 years he has been one of the most esteemed actors in the United States.

## K is for Martin Luther King Jr.



In the years since his assassination on April 4, 1968, as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, Martin Luther King, Jr., has evolved from a prominent civil rights leader into the Symbol for the civil all backgrounds; his words are quoted by the powerless and the powerful, rights movement in the United States. He is studied by schoolchildren of by anyone who has a dream to make her or his life better, better the nation, or the world. Monuments have been dedicated in his honor and institutions such as the Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta which bears his name have been established to carry on his work In 1986, the U.S. Congress made King unique among twentieth-century Americans by designating his birthday a federal holiday.



## L is for Jacob Lawrence



**Jacob Lawrence was one of the first African American artists to rise to prominence in the mainstream American art world. He was encouraged by teachers and fellow artists during his teenage years to study both art and African American history. He combined these interests to produce works unique in both their subject and style. Many of these comprise series of panels that join together to create a narrative. Lawrence is also known as an illustrator of books for adults and children.**

## M is for Toni Morrison



**Toni Morrison became a novelist for the ages when she was awarded the 1993 Nobel Prize for literature. Only the eighth woman and the first black to win the prize In describing Morrison's work the Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy stated: "She delves into the language itself, a language she wants to liberate from the fetters of race. And she addresses us with the luster of poetry.**

## N is for I. DeQuincey Newman



**The Reverend I. DeQuincey Newman was one of the states's most important leaders during the civil rights revolution. He led the NAACP through the turbulent 1960s and capped his long and distinguished political career when he came out of retirement in 1983 to be elected as the state's first African-American South Carolina state senator since 1886.**

## O is For Jessie Owens



**Owens dominated the track and field competitions by winning gold medals and breaking world records in the 100-and 200-meter dashes and the 400-meter relay, in addition to winning the gold medal in the broad jump. Against an international backdrop of tension and fear, Adolf Hitler ceremoniously attended the games and cheered for German athletes. The emotionally charged scene gave birth to one of the most dramatic of sports myths. Hitler supposedly snubbed Owens, refusing to shake his hand after his victories, and allegedly stormed out of the stadium enraged that Owens's athleticism refuted the Nazi dogma of Aryan superiority.**



## P is for Colin Powell



**Powell is named by President elect Bush as the next United States secretary of state. Powell's acceptance marks the first formal Cabinet appointment for the Bush administration. Already highly regarded by political and military leaders in the White House Congress, and the Pentagon, U.S. Army General Colin Powell achieved national and international prominence in 1990 and 1991 as one of the key leaders of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the military campaigns to protect Saudi Arabia and liberate Kuwait from Iraqi control. Powell, as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, heads up the Pentagon and serves as the president's top military adviser, placing him among the most powerful policy makers in the world.**

## Q is for Queen Latifa



**Born Dana Owens 30 years ago in Newark, New Jersey, this multi-talented star first came to the public's attention in 1989 with the release of her groundbreaking debut album "All Hail the Queen." With her debut album and the subsequent single "Ladies First," Latifah set the standard for what a woman in the hip-hop game can and should say and be. Winning a Grammy Award in 1994 for Best Rap Solo Performance for the song "U.N.I.T.Y." firmly established Latifah as a positive voice in hip-hop, as well as a role model of empowerment and pride for her generation, especially young women.**

## R is for Della Reese



**As both an accomplished actress and singer of gospel, pop, and blues, Della Reese admits that her first love is singing. She is well known for her clear, powerful voice, distinctive diction, and emotional delivery. Yet television and movie performances have rounded out her varied career in the entertainment business and showcased her talents both as a comedic and dramatic actress.**

## S is for Will Smith



**On television he is the Fresh Prince of Bel Air, a streetwise Philadelphian sent to live with wealthy relatives in California. In real life he is Will Smith, a streetwise Philadelphian who has--by virtue of hard work and infectious charm--found stardom and wealth in Los Angeles. Smith has enjoyed vast success in two different fields of popular entertainment. While still too young to drink legally, he released several platinum rap albums and won the first-ever Grammy Award given in the rap category.**



## T is for Cicely Tyson



African-American movie actress Cicely Tyson's views regarding her career and her race are presented. Aside from acting, Tyson is involved in dealing with problems regarding racial discrimination among black women.

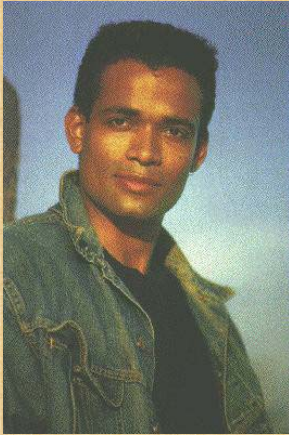
## U is for YOU!!

Become a notable African American.

Set the example.

Become the Solution not the Problem

## V is for Mario Van Peebles



**Mario Van Peebles**, once regarded as an up-and-coming actor, has established himself as one of a prolific new generation of black filmmakers with a widely acclaimed movie to his credit. After the handsome actor appeared in films and on television for more than five years, he was asked to direct a small-budget movie about drug abuse in the New York City ghetto. The resulting work, *New Jack City*, was both a commercial and a critical success, earning huge profits for its studio and making a permanent name for Van Peebles.

## W is for Flip Wilson



A trailblazer of a comedian, **Flip Wilson** was one of America's most popular entertainers in the first half of the 1970s. He created comic characters that have remained indelibly etched in the public mind, and enriched the American language with such catch phrases as "The Devil made me do it!" Wilson was the first African American performer to catch on as host of a major weekly network variety show on television, and, like the musical artists of the Motown label with whom he shared a mainstream appeal, brought blacks to a new level of exposure and acceptance in the American entertainment industry, paving a future path for such smooth comedian/hosts as Arsenio Hall and Keenen Ivory Wayans



## X is for Malcolm X



When I talk about my father," said Attallah Shabazz to Rolling Stone. "I do my best to make Malcolm human. I don't want these kids to keep him on the pedestal, I don't want them to feel his goals are unattainable. I'll remind them that at their age he was doing time." The powerful messages of Malcolm X, his dramatic life, and his tragic assassination conspire to make him an unreachable hero. Events in the 1960s provided four Americans: John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. These idealistic men believed in the possibilities for social change, the necessity of that change, and the truth of his vision of change..

## Y is for Whitney M. Young



- " During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Whitney M. Young, Jr., was an articulate and complex leader who held a sometimes uncomfortable position between black radicals who urged faster and more dramatic changes and the white liberals who financed the movement. As executive director of the National Urban League, he counseled presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon; he exhorted business leaders to bring blacks into the work force; and he worked to train and educate black America.

## Z is for Matthew Zimmerman



**Zimmerman became the first African-American student to graduate with a master of divinity degree from Duke University. He was ordained by the National Baptist Convention, Inc., USA and began serving as a campus pastor at universities and colleges throughout the country. Later, he received a master of science degree in guidance and counseling from Long Island University in New York. In 1967, he entered into military service and was commissioned captain by direct appointment. On April 13, 1989, President Bush nominated Zimmerman for promotion to brigadier general. Following confirmation by the United States Senate, he was appointed deputy chief of chaplains of the United States Army.**